

## **REGION IX, MAINLAND REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (MRRT)**

Co-Chaired at the regional and national levels by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard

Minutes of meeting May 27-28, 1998, at the Rio Rico Resort and Country Club, Rio Rico, Arizona

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order Wednesday, May 27, 1998, at 9:09 a.m. by MRRT Co-Chair Kathleen G. Shimmin, USEPA, and Co-Chair Capt. Ed Page, USCG. Self-introductions of those in attendance followed.

### **II. Program**

Subject: Arizona Welcome and Comments on State Issues

Speaker: Michael P. Austin, Director, Arizona Div. of Emergency Management

Summary: Industry is involved in emergency planning, identifying of facilities and use of same for emergency shelters. Motorola, Inc. in Tempe noted as one of "responsible corporate citizens." He briefly discussed Project Impact's role in the city of Tempe. Mr. Austin suggested there is a "disconnect" between federal expectations and state expectations and measurement, and felt that FEMA is not participating as fully as the state had expected. He added, however, that Arizona has not had a federal disaster declaration-- and is using this "safe haven" outlook to attract businesses.

Subject: May 1999 Workshops and Discussion

Speaker: Daniel Roe, Executive Director, Arizona SERC

Summary: Mr. Roe announced the State Emergency Response Commission has been extended another 10 years. He discussed data management and Risk Management Plan (RMP) issues. He reported that an audit found that the DEM/SERC should have enforcement authority, but the State believes it should be kept Federal.

There is concern about Indian groups and emergency planning:

- \* Partnering has been with intertribal Council to support Indian nations;
- \* Arizona believes FEMA should have tribal participants in Project Impact, also.

Arizona will host the National Association of SARA Title III Program Officials (NASTTPO) conference May 18-21, 1999, and CAMEO training the following week at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Phoenix. The State wants RRT support and involvement in this conference and other activities during week.

Subject: Local and Border Issues, Response

Speaker: Mike Foster, Arizona Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Summary: He stated that Arizona border counties are forming a coalition to deal with funding and liability issues. Border counties, he contended, have great demands made upon their resources. Mercury is a big concern. There is an average of one spill a week. Mercury vapor meters are needed at the local level.

Cleanup protocols are not clear (school and residential neighborhoods). Cochise County is considering going to Customs to require public signs concerning persons bringing mercury jewelry from Mexico.

Cdr. John Walmsley of the U.S. Public Health Service suggested the Consumer Products Safety Commission may have some interest in the mercury jewelry issue. A motion was made by Dan Roe and seconded by Don Lollock to contact the Consumer Products Safety Commission concerning transport of mercury in jewelry into the U.S. RRT membership approved this motion unanimously.

Speaker: Mike Walsh, Coordinator, Tucson-Pima County Office of Emergency Management

Summary: He is working with Santa Cruz and Cochise counties on an exercise and lessons learned, and revamping Pima County hazmat teams. There is a question of whether the team can respond outside the county. Mr. Walsh said the Tucson Fire Department is looking at joint response and mutual aid situations. The primary issues are: financial support, liability, and recovery costs.

Fire Chief Richard Flores of the Tohono O'odham Tribe said he wants to talk with FEMA and U.S. EPA concerning funds in order to enhance their cooperative response to counties outside of Indian nations.

#### LUNCH BREAK

Subject: Local and Border Issues, Response (continued)

Speaker: Dale Anderson, Arizona Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Emergency Response Unit

Summary: Cited a 1996 State Fire Marshal survey of more than 250 fire departments. Of 500,000 responses, 5,000 or 1 % were hazmat (fuels, drug labs, mercury, corrosives). Mr. Anderson said DEQ's role is to support field personnel. He also discussed a new funding mechanism (State Superfund) for the hazardous substances program.

On other principal issues, he said the State has become more involved in the Colorado River Plan. The Bureau of Reclamation/Dept. of the Interior has been tasked to assist in planning & exercises, and DOI is updating the sub-area plan. He added that more interaction is needed with U.S. Coast Guard units at Bullhead City and Lake Havasu, Arizona.

Ms. Shimmin interjected that the Plan is scheduled for updating this year. Capt. Ed Page stated the auxiliary units at Bullhead City and Lake Havasu were not trained for hazmat response, but could help with local knowledge base. The State would like to participate in readiness inspections along the River.

A brief report was given on the New River case, an area approximately 50 miles north of Phoenix where the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) reportedly has uncovered a stockpile of explosives.

A discussion of spill reporting procedures followed. The State would like to change and improve the system of reporting, and has solicited U.S. EPA Region IX's support. The State would like EPA's acceptance of the State's input and format. Dan Roe's office is helping to develop a common database. Mr. Anderson also asked for federal input to database for one-site information.

Speaker: "Mac" Mc Williams, Santa Cruz, Arizona, County

Summary: Reported on the Cross Border Exercise that had good participation from both the United States and Mexico. Scenario incorporated both criminal and hazmat elements. Mr. Mc Williams said the Arizona Attorney General is placing greater emphasis on border environmental crimes.

Jesus Gomez, Nogales Fire Dept. hazmat inspector, noted the number of trained techs but said they do not have sufficient equipment to respond to hazmat incidents.

A class is needed for hazmat responders. As a follow-up, the State was asked if training and reimbursement would be available through the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

Problems with fumigants and produce trucks were noted. It was recommended that a U.S. Customs representative be invited to the next Mainland RRT meeting.

Speaker: Richard Flores, Fire Chief, Tohono O'odham Tribe

Summary: Announced the Native American Fire Chiefs Association is being formed to serve as an information and coordination outlet.

Speaker: Beverly Bruce, Gila River Indian Community, DEQ

Summary: Discussed drafting of ordinance to implement EPCRA and development of memorandums of understanding (MOU) with other agencies.

Speaker: Reginald L. Campbell, Chair, Cochise County LEPC

Summary: Working with cross-border personnel at Agua Prieta in hazmat training, using borrowed equipment. Team is trained to Level B. Mr. Campbell says there is a need to train Customs personnel on both sides of the border.

He added that cost recovery on interstate hazmat response is very slow, and echoed previous comments that environmental crime is on the increase. An example of the latter is the smuggling of methyl parathion across the border for sale at flea markets.

Speaker: Kirk King, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Summary: Cited what he called "chronic contamination" of Santa Cruz River. Samples of chlorine and ammonia have been collected, including high levels of the latter from a wastewater treatment plant.

Speaker: Anne Fischer, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/Forest Service

Summary: She described a remediation project that occurred after an estimated 365,000 yards of tailings, including copper, lead and molybdenum, was discovered in Pinto Creek.

Speaker: Patrick McMullen, intertribal Council of Arizona

Summary: Reported on an EPCRA training program, using FEMA and DOT funds, being offered to tribes in Arizona. Training would cover hazmat awareness, how to do plans, and CAMEO. Mr. Macmillan added that all five tribes along the Colorado River would be interested in any scheduled training.

He would like to see the Stafford Act revised to help tribes during declared disasters.

Speaker: John Krause, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Summary: Highlighted the Bureau's \$3.7M budget. He spoke of the large number of sites identified for cleanup, and said an Environmental Audit Program would be initiated.

Mr. Krause also discussed trustee notification issues, BIA owner/operator activities, the Havasupai flooding, Leviathan and Rio Pinto Mine releases. He would like ATSDR assistance in assessing human health risks. How to get this was discussed.

Speaker: Jim Renthal, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Summary: Discussed Field Coordinating Committee (FCC) Issue Teams for 1998. They include: Environmental education, management of shared water resources, Upper San Pedro River Basin, aerial photography and resource mapping, Lower Rio Grande, Tahono O'odham-resource protection, Sister City areas, habitat restoration and conservation, Wildland Fire Management Agreement.

Ken Osborn of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Denver is a contact for aerial photography and mapping. His telephone number is 303/202-4138.

Future Issue Teams may include Ecotourism.

Speaker: Don Lollock, California Dept. of Fish and Game (DFG), Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR)

Summary: Noted DFG reorganization. They respond to all spills off highways. Priorities are: public health and safety, natural resources, and economic interest protection. Support is derived from the Oil Pollution Response Fund and Pollution Abatement Fund.

Mr. Lollock said that as priorities change the Incident Command System (ICS) lead changes. There have been a number of spills this year affecting natural resources, and the El Nino weather patterns have resulted in some broken pipelines.

OSPR participated in an Exxon drill in the Santa Barbara Channel; dispersant use approval was sought, and the Quick Response System used and approval granted 30 minutes from time of request--Chevron was very impressed.

Mr. Lollock also reported on the status of natural resources in California. Under the State of California constitution all natural resources are the concern of the Dept. of Fish and Game. When calls come into the 24-hour number, the DFG operations duty officer is notified.

Speaker: Hank Everett, FBI Special Agent

Summary: Described the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Program as part of Presidential Decision Directive #39 (PDD-39). The program responds to external and internal terrorist acts.

Speaker: Cathi Slaminski, California Office of Emergency Services

Summary: Reviewed status of grant received from U.S. EPA to establish a Border Database. Cities and counties are involved, primarily in tech support.

Dan Roe, Arizona SERC, asked if the CAMEO database is in Spanish. A Spanish-language database was developed under a U.S. EPA grant and delivered to Warren Beer at EPA Region IX. The chemical database, however, is still in English. Mr. Roe added that issues of WMD are "very do-able" on CAMEO.

Ms. Shimmin, responding to Ms. Slaminski, said California OES is seeking EPA grant money to establish a Border Database, also referred to as the "Jim Hunt Project."

FIRST DAY OF MEETING ADJOURNED

Region IX MRRT Second Day, May 28, 1998, CALLED TO ORDER by Co-Chairs

#### I. Border Issues and Activities

Speaker: Capt. Ed Page, USCG Marine Safety Division

Summary: PowerPoint information passed out. Capt. Page said the Spills of National Significance (SONS) exercise will have a larger scenario spill than that of the Exxon Valdez, which occurred almost 10 years ago.

Capt. Page described five USCG strategic goals, as contained in a "Report to Shareholders." They are: Safety, Mobilization of Ports, Maritime Security, Protection of Natural Resources and Fisheries, and National Defense.

He also stated that future RRT minutes would be posted on the USCG Website: [www.USCG.mil/pacarea/pm](http://www.USCG.mil/pacarea/pm).

Speaker: Cdr. John Walmsley, Dept. of Health and Human Services

Summary: Reported he is continuing development of a Metropolitan Medical Strike Team Response Plan for six cities in the region: Phoenix, Honolulu, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco.

Phoenix has had training and a tabletop exercise.

The next round of cities include: Tucson, with training scheduled October 1998; Sacramento, November 1998, and Long Beach, January 1999.

Speaker: Jim Goodfellow, Nevada Div. of Emergency Management (DEM)

Summary: Two major events occurred in 1997, flooding and a chemical explosion in an explosives plant. Mr. Goodfellow said that Allen Biaggi has succeeded Lou Dodgion as Div. of Environmental Protection (DEP) director.

He stated that funds for counterterrorism training will go directly to the National Fire Academy in FY99. He suggested that cuts in response funding will have a substantial impact on locals, adding that responders need equipment and supplies, in addition to training. This impact will be especially felt by the poorer states.

Mr. Goodfellow recommended a workshop format for the upcoming meeting in Reno, encouraging an exchange of information. He also stated that the Truckee River subarea plan should be associated with the Tahoe plan. He said it might be time for a brushup on the National Contingency Plan (NCP). Since Nevada is 87 % Federal land and 13 % State and Local, major Federal landholders (DOD, DOE, DOI, FS) should participate in meeting.

Ms. Shimmin responded to a couple of points made by Mr. Goodfellow, noting that the NCP says the RRT is the lead for inland contingency planning, and that EPA Region IX/ESF 10 and Nevada DEM had agreed (at March 1998 meeting in Las Vegas) to develop a joint Concept of Operations for Southern and Northern Nevada.

Under general discussion, Ms. Shimmin said the RCP is outdated but is supposed to be revised by end of calendar year by a contractor. It hasn't been reviewed since 1994. She proposed that a sub section of members work on revisions. Dan Roe of Arizona SERC, Cathi Slaminski of California OES, Pat Port of the Dept. of the Interior, and Robert Sánchez of USCG will compose a subcommittee to look at an RCP brochure for newcomers to RRT. Representatives of agencies are to bring information on disk or hard copy.

Speaker: Pat Port, Dept. of The Interior

Summary: Noted BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix. It is accredited and has a graduate certificate program in hazardous materials management. There are 15 courses. Telephone 602/906-5552, contact Mark Phillips or Bob Sykes.

Members asked for a status report on the Colorado River Plan.

Ms. Port said there are eight bureaus in DOI, with representatives of Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at this meeting.

Speaker: Dan Strausbaugh, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Summary: Outlined what ATSDR does and who they work with in respective states. Mr. Strausbaugh referenced agency's activities in State and distributed informational materials.

A general discussion ensued pertaining to U.S. Customs and specific border issues. Information summary was to be prepared by Mike Foster and faxed to EPA. Co-chairs were to write concerns to Customs and send carbon copies to Congressman Pastor.

Speaker: Lt. Eric Doucette, Operations Officer, Pacific Strike Team

Summary: Reviewed coordination efforts with on-scene coordinators to recent responses.

Announced that annual National Strike Force (NSF) training camp will be in Mobile, Alabama in fall.

Under general discussion, RRT members expressed support for concept of Basic Bolder program, and endorsed Phase 2 of One Plan, which consists of multiple plans under one roof. State requested Co-chairs write letter, expressing RRT support, and send to CSI Council (this was done June 5, 1998).

FY98 Workplan copies were distributed.

Ms. Shimmin pinpointed issues and projects that have not been addressed or need updating. Many of them have a technological or scientific emphasis.

A draft of the FY99 Workplan will be accomplished at the Reno, Nevada meeting Sept.30 and Oct. 1, 1998.

Kickoff meeting for the third round of Nunn-Lugar-Domenici counterterrorism sessions is scheduled for Oakland, California, in August or September.

Ms. Shimmin also informed membership that Basic Bolder is described in the Common Sense initiative. Mike Ardito is lead project officer for Region IX. Purpose of the grant is to increase use of laptops by fire departments. Mr. Ardito has requested the RRT endorse the CSI concept and send a letter to the CSI Council.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 12 NOON

--MRRT minutes Don Anthony 1/99; Al Fischer 3/99; received by U.S. Coast Guard for posting to the website on 15 April 1999.